

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



DELAWARE HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Public Health

FAQ: Coronavirus & Domestic Animals

Can I get COVID-19 from my pet?

At this time, there has not been shown any pet to human transmission of COVID-19. The thousands of worldwide cases have been human-to-human transmission.

Can I give COVID-19 to my pet?

To date, there is no evidence of human-to-pet illness in pets.

I heard there was a dog in China that tested positive for coronavirus. Now I'm worried my dog will get it.

There was a single dog that tested weak positive for very small amount of the virus. This dog is a 17-year old pomeranian that lived in the house with a person that tested positive. This dog has not shown any signs of illness from exposure to this virus. The other dog in the household has tested negative.

Continued testing and investigation is ongoing to determine what this weak positive test actually means. A commercial lab in the US has been working to develop and validate a test for pets and has retroactively tested thousands of dogs and cats that were showing respiratory illness symptoms. Their veterinarians had previously submitted testing for common canine respiratory illnesses. To date, NONE of these dogs or cats has tested positive for the COVID-19 illness.

If my pet was around someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19, should I be worried?

At this time, according to experts at the CDC, OIE, and WHO there is no evidence that a pet can spread the infection to other animals, including people. However, out of an abundance of caution, it is still recommended to separate pets from infected people, just as we are separating other people from infected people.

What are signs of my pet having COVID-19?

To date, no pets have been shown to become ill with COVID-19. Any respiratory symptoms are likely to be a common canine disease and should be investigated by your veterinarian.



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What are signs of my pet having COVID-19?

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Is my pet safe to be around other pets? Should I practice social distancing?

With this outbreak it is wise to make appropriate social distancing a part of your everyday interactions. This would include you, your household, and your pets.

Should I do anything to specially disinfect my pet?

Normal cleanliness and hygiene should be maintained with any pet. Because pet fur is porous, it is not an ideal fomite for spread. As always, you should wash your hands after handling pets, clean your pet's food and water bowls, keep your pet's coat well groomed, and keep bedding material and toys clean.

What precautions should I take for my pet if someone in my family tests positive for COVID-19?

Although there have not been any reports of pets becoming sick with COVID-19, you should do all the things recommended by the CDC to consistently keep from spreading the virus. Limit exposure to other humans as well as pets. Have another family member care for the pet. If that is not possible, wash your hands before and after interaction with your pet and wear a facemask if possible.

It is important to remember there is currently no evidence that pets can contract or spread COVID-19.

Cover your mouth or nose with your elbow when sneezing or coughing. Do not touch your face. If you have a service animal and must interact with your pet, wash hands before and after handling pets, their belongings, and their food. Wear a facemask if you are ill and around pets or people. Do not allow your pet to kiss or lick you. Do not share food, plates, utensils or bedding with pets or people.

When you use tissues, napkins, or other disposable contaminated paper products, discard these items immediately where your pet cannot access them and other people will not be exposed to them. While we are recommending these as good practices, it is important to remember there is currently no evidence that pets can contract or spread COVID-19.

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Additionally, if you do find you have to isolate yourself, it is important to have a plan set up beforehand.

- ▶ Make sure your pet's microchip information is up to date
- ▶ Make sure your pet's veterinary care and vaccines are up to date
- ▶ Organize your veterinary records so they are handy
- ▶ In addition to making sure you have a supply of your own medication, be certain you have at least 2-4 weeks of your pet's medication
- ▶ Ensure you have an adequate supply of pet food, litter, and other consumable supplies
- ▶ Have crates/carriers available in case you have to transport your pets
- ▶ Have a pet care plan/caretaker in place in case you need to be away from home, hospitalized, etc.



If I need to be hospitalized for COVID-19, what do I need to do for my animals?

People with COVID-19 should tell their public health point of contact, loved ones, or friend that they have pets or other animals in their home or under their care (for livestock) that need to be cared for.

I have heard of “coronavirus” infections in dogs and cats, and even a vaccine in dogs. Are these contagious to people?

The term “coronavirus” is a general term describing a family of viruses. There are many different viruses within this family. The coronavirus specific to dogs can cause mild GI symptoms in puppies and the one most commonly seen in cats, called FIP or feline infectious peritonitis, can cause fever and a variety of symptoms in cats. These viruses only infect dogs and cats, respectively, and the vaccination for coronavirus in dogs only protects dogs from the specific dog coronavirus.

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I am ill and my pet needs to see a veterinarian. What should I do?

First of all, if you are ill, you will need to stay home and find someone to take your pet to the veterinary office. Contact your veterinarian to see when and how they wish to proceed. They may be able to help you by telephone or they may need a healthy person to bring the pet in for evaluation. In order to best protect their staff, they will likely have special instructions for your pet upon arrival, such as keeping the pet in the car until time for examination, or having your pet come in through a separate entrance away from the main waiting room.

Additional Resources

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association): https://www.avma.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/covid-19-faq-pet-owners_031520.pdf

Guidance for interaction of infected people with pets: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/interim-guidance-managing-people-in-home-care-and-isolation-who-have-pets.html>

OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health): <https://www.oie.int/scientific-expertise/specific-information-and-recommendations/questions-and-answers-on-2019-novel-coronavirus/>

Questions? Contact us.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH CALL CENTER

1-866-408-1899

People with a hearing impairment can call

7-1-1

8:30am-4:00PM Monday - Friday